

PTSA Parent Meeting

Farragut Middle School

Monday, October 21, 2019 - 6:30p

Lloyd Library

Minutes

The first PTSA Parent Meeting of the 2019-2020 school year began at 6:30p. All present introduced themselves.

Ms. Kipper handed out several articles and documents that may be of interest to parents including:

- [“Racists are Recruiting. Watch your White Sons.”](#) – Article from the New York Times
- [Press Release](#) re: Fifth Grade Wellness Day which took place October 16, 2019
- Flyer re: [Family University](#) – October 22, 2019

I. PTSA Announcements

- Volunteers are needed for the 8th Grade Graduation party. A meeting was held for 8th grade parents following the PTSA meeting to organize for this event. If you are the parent of an 8th grader, please reach out to Kefira Wilderman at fmsvp2@ptsahastings.org to find out how you can help.
- Volunteers are needed for the Hillside New Book Fair - Oct. 30 - Nov. 2 at Hillside (books & spirit wear for sale). Volunteers are needed for both the book fair and for logowear sales. The proceeds of both book and logowear sales go directly to supporting students at all three schools in our district. Please assist if you can.

[Click here](#) to volunteer for the book fair.

[Click here](#) to volunteer to help with logowear.

- The PTSA is providing funds for two Winter Dances at FMS. There will be a dance for Grades 5/6 on January 24, 2020 and one for Grades 7/8 February 7, 2020. The goal of these events is to provide a safe social outlet for FMS students. The dances will be in the evening for approximately two hours, with drinks, snacks and dancing. Volunteers will be needed at both events

and more detail about volunteering will be forthcoming. Students will assist with decorations and other preparations as well. No phones or other devices will be allowed. SEPTA is working to create a “lounge area” space at each dance that will allow kids to socialize in a quieter, less crowded environment. For more information about the dances or to volunteer to assist, please contact Audrey DeWys (audreydewys@gmail.com) who is spearheading the project.

II. SEPTA Announcements

- The Board of Education has reconvened a Special Education committee. The Committee will focus on NYS Indicator 13 which evaluates the degree to which students with IEPs are being prepared for college and post-secondary school life.
- The first FMS SEPTA Community Conversation is Thursday, October 24th at 6:30p in the Lloyd Library. Topics to be discussed include what FMS is doing re: Indicator 13 and an update on Professional Development at FMS.
- SEPTA has coordinated with the PTSA to fund Windward School training grants for several FMS teachers and administrators.
- If you have any questions or would like to see SEPTA address particular topics at upcoming events, please email hastings.septa@gmail.com.

III. Administrative Announcements

- Ms. Kipper thanked SEPTA and PTSA for Professional Development grants (Windward School training).
- FMS and HHS are considering a pilot of a revised schedule, incorporating a later start time. This is being considered in response to research indicating that teenagers need more sleep and that later school start times can be beneficial for this age group.
 - The details about how the schedule will work are still being refined by FMS and HHS leadership and more information will be forthcoming about if and when the pilot may take place.
 - If the pilot proceeds, please note that the amount of instructional time will remain the same, and the schedule will take into account students who receive services before school, orchestra and band rehearsals and modified sports, among other considerations. The library and

cafeteria will still be open and supervision will still be provided beginning at 7:30a and the school day will still end at 3:15p.

- Wellness Day - Grade 5
 - Ms. Kipper asked for parent feedback about the 5th grade Wellness Day.
 - Parents reported that students loved it and that feedback was generally positive.
 - Wellness Day offered workshops about acceptance, kindness, stress, hygiene, health snacks and pedestrian safety. Ms. Kipper noted that 5th graders also wrote words of affirmation which are now on display in the cafeteria and the support suite hallway.
 - Parents requested moving the pedestrian safety talk earlier in the year, and/or including it in the 4th-5th grade transition meeting that students attend.
 - Ms. Kipper reported that the other grades also received the pedestrian safety talk, and that FMS administration is considering ways to bring the other Wellness workshop topics to 6th, 7th and 8th grades.
- Family University - October 22 - 7:00PM - High School Auditorium
 - Ms. Kipper reminded parents about Family University on Tuesday, October 22 at 7p in the HHS Auditorium.
 - Family University is open to all parents in the district and to students in grades 8-12.
 - At this event, students and their family members participate in parallel workshops.
 - Family University has worked closely with the Hastings WAY coalition and the Hastings Community Center on this project.
 - Next year, FMS is considering appropriate content for 7th graders as well.
- Transition to Google - Google vs. Schoolwires
 - Mr. Keogh reported on several IT-related changes in the district.
 - First, the district has moved to utilizing Gmail as its platform, and its email addresses have been simplified to @hohschools.org. However, if you accidentally email @learn.hohschools.org (the older address), the emails will still be forwarded and received by the intended person. However, Mr. Keogh and Ms. Kipper emphasized that if you do not receive a response from one of them within 24 hours, or from a teacher within a day or two, please reach out again and/or notify Ms. Kipper and Mr. Keogh as it is possible an email got lost in the transition.

- Google Classroom is the now the district standard. Google Classroom is what is used for assignments and classroom discussions.
 - Schoolwires is the school website and is public. Assignments will no longer be posted on it. It is solely for content such as general grade level information.
 - The Parent Portal is a secure environment for sensitive information such as student info, emergency contacts and grades.
 - For any questions about these platforms and how they should be used, feel free to reach out to Mr. Keogh at keoghc@hohschools.org.
- Responsible Use of Cellphones and Texting
 - A discussion was held about children who do not have cell phones and issues of inclusion. Though there are many children at FMS in all grades who do not have phones, there is a sense by some that children without phones are left out of social discussions that take place via text, and that phones are considered by some as a status symbol and this can also be a sensitive issue for children without them.
 - Parents raised the idea that a similar issue exists for children with flip phones v. smartphones.
 - Parents also noted that there are other alternatives to a smartphone for children such as the Tick Talk and Gizmo Watches, which allow children to call but are tightly restricted.
 - A request was made for parents of children with phones to talk with their children about kindness and inclusiveness of other kids, whether they have a smartphone, a flip phone, or no phone at all.

The meeting went over the allotted time and therefore two topics were tabled for the next meeting and will be at the top of the agenda next time:

- DASA Reporting
- Incidents of Bias - Discussion

Minutes from this meeting will be posted on the [FMS Website](#). The next PTSA Parent meeting is Monday, December 16, 2019 at 6:30p in the Lloyd Library.